

A C E L D A M A

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: ... A time to win, and a time to lose."

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Game 1967AT, Arma 7:

V A S T R U S S I A N E X P A N S I O N

1907 Fall moves:

Russia (Kinney): Fleet North Atlantic to Mid-Atlantic. Fleet Norwegian Sea stand. Army Norway support army Sweden. Army Sweden support GERMAN fleet Denmark. Army Edinburgh to Liverpool. Army Yorkshire support army Edinburgh to Liverpool. Army Ukraine to Sevastopol. Army Galicia to Rumania. Army Trieste support GERMAN army Tyrolia to Venice. Army Rumanis to Bulgaria. Army Serbia support army Rumanis to Bulgaria. Fleet Constantinople to Smyrna. Army Armenia support fleet Constantinople to Smyrna. Fleet Ankara to Black Sea.

Germany (Haus): Fleet Denmark support RUSSIAN army Sweden. Army Kiel support Denmark. Army Holland to Belgium. Army Belgium to Burgundy. Army Brest stand. Army Gascony to Spain. Army Marseille support army Gascony to Spain. Army Piedmont to Venice. Army Tyrolia support army Piedmont to Venice.

France (Greene): Army Spain stand. Fleet Western Mediterranean support army Spain. Fleet Ionian Sea stand. Army Venice stand.

Turkey (Reinsel): Army Bulgaria to Greece. Fleet Black Sea to Constantinople. Fleet Smyrna support fleet Black Sea to Constantinople.

England (Tzudiker): No moves received. Army Liverpool stand.

Austria (Moning): Army Tuscany support FRENCH army Venice.

The support attempted by the Russian army Trieste fails because the move being supported was not ordered. That the support of the Turkish fleet Smyrna remains good although the fleet is dislodged is an instance of the Boardman-rulebook solution of Boardman's Dilemma, used in Armageddonia. The dislodged Turkish fleet has the Aegean, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Syria, open to it for

retreat. The English army Liverpool is annihilated, being dislodged and having received no orders.

Press releases.

Moscow to the Liverpudlian Empire: Relay to Washington our confidential message, will you? ZAP! Take that!
Moscow to the dynamic duo: Hearty congratulations from the new Czar upon the marriage of your two noble families; remember, the family that reigns together, dies together!

As a result of the moves reported above the belligerent powers control the following supply centres, none of them being affected by the retreats.

Russia. 4 home, Ankara, Smyrna, Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Trieste, Budapest, Vienna, Norway, Sweden, London, Edinburgh, Liverpool. 17 in all. May build 3.

Germany. 3 home, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Paris, Brest, Marseilles. 9 in all. No adjustment.

France. Portugal, Spain, Tunis, Naples, Venice. 5 in all. Entitled to one build, but there are no open home supply centres.

Turkey. Constantinople, Greece. 2 in all. Must remove 1.

Austria. Rome. No change.

England. None. No change as last force already eliminated.

Deadline for retreats, and also for builds and removals, which may be made, if desired, conditional on the retreats, is Tuesday, 28 January 1969. As is usual with auxilliary moves, they will be published ahead of deadline if received ahead of deadline.

Just's Right-hand Retreat Rule.

Eric Just has developed a rule, called the Just Right-hand Retreat Rule, which is used in his games in the Diplomat and, I believe, one or two other places elsewhere. When I published a discussion of rule question last summer, in Brob #84, I was only vaguely aware of his rule. However, its existence was brought home to me shortly thereafter and I had intended to include a discussion of it in the issue of Brob which was to have brought up to date the positions of the various zines on all rule disputes. The issue didn't appear. Whether I can manage such an over-all survey in Aceldama is doubtful. However, I mentioned to Eric that I would discuss some aspects of his rule; and he published a statement to that effect in The Diplomat #21. So it seems best to give here what I had intended to say in Brob, since the latter is now in other hands.

First of all, what is the rule? It can best be described by an example. Suppose a power, say England, has a fleet in the North Sea. Suppose the fleet is dislodged by an attack, say German, coming from the Skagerrack. According to the concept behind the Just Rule there existed, prior to the dislodgment, a front between the two fleets. The dislodged fleet then retreats as close to its own front as possible and to its right, that is to Denmark. If Denmark is closed because occupied, or because of a stand-off on the move, the second choice would again be as close to the front as possible but now to the left. That is, Norway, is second choice. Then two away from the front but on the right again, i.e., Helgoland Bight, then the left, Norwegian Sea. The whole list of priorities using this rule in the circumstances quoted would be, Denmark, Norway, Helgoland Bight, Norwegian Sea, Holland, Edinburgh, Belgium, Yorkshire, English Channel, London. The first in the list which was available for retreat would be the one used. The ordering is quite simple: as close to the front as possible; of two equally close to the front, the one on the retreating force's right. However, if on the move from which the retreat arose, the dislodged force had itself attempted to move, say fleet North Sea had played to Norwegian Sea in our example, then the front is between it and the place to which it had attempted to move. For instance, the fleet trying to enter the Norwegian Sea, failing due to stand off, and dislodged by an attack from elsewhere, would then have priority order, Norway, Edinburgh, Skagerrack, Yorkshire, Denmark, London, Helgoland Bight, Channel, Holland, Belgium.

When I first heard of this I was horrified; I thought that it was a categorical retreat which must be used if it had been it would have been directly contrary to the rulebook which gives the player the right to make his own retreat after dislodgment. However, Eric wrote me and explained matters. Players in his game are expected to foresee dislodgment of their forces. They submit for any of their forces which may be dislodged a list of preferences for retreat. Only in the case that the player neglects to submit such a list is the Right Hand Rule invoked.

This solution of the retreat issue appears neat: it allows everything for Spring 1903 to be out of the way before anything for Fall of that year is demanded. In my opinion, however, the advantage is all apparent, rather than real. As Charles Wells once said, we all fudge a little on retreats. Given the circumstances of postal play it is necessary to combine them with the preceding move (the move on which the dislodgment occurs), or to combine them with the following move. If we opt for the former, as the Just rule does, the player has to consider every force of his which might possibly be dislodged, and every conceivable position of all other forces on the board. This is, in my opinion, to put far too great demands upon him. For instance, our player may realize that one of his forces could be dislodged by his official enemy with whom he has been at war for some time. He may submit a preferred retreat, as the Just procedure demands. But suppose that some other power with whom he previously had a non-aggression pact, chooses to move against him that same move. Some other retreat might, in the circumstances, be

better, but, in the Just procedure, the player is now stuck with it. That is, the player is expected to foresee an enormous range of possibilities. The more usual procedure in other magazines is far less demanding. A player has to make a retreat and, let us say, Silesia and Prussia are open for it. Both the retreat and the next set of moves are asked for by the following deadline. For most of the players it makes no difference at all and they just submit a set of following moves. The player who must retreat knows where he is retreating, & likewise submits one set of moves. Normally only the power whose attack caused the dislodgment will have to submit two sets of moves, if to Silesia such-and-such, if to Prussia so-and-so.

Both the usual conditional move procedure, and the Just procedure, avoid the need to publish a journal for a single retreat. Both save the waste of 2 or 3 weeks, or whatever is required for that publication. Both are slight departures from the standard game in order to fit it to the realities of a publishing schedule, i.e., they are both slight "fudges" in Wells' words. One is as legal as the other. But it seems to me that the advantage in not making exorbitant demands of the players' foresight lies altogether with the more usual procedure of combining the retreat with the following move, rather than with the preceding one.

Even in the case of games run in the normal manner players often foresee that one of the forces may be forced to retreat, and they sometimes submit conditional retreats with their moves. There can be no harm in this: if the retreat does have to be made, and if it is the only one that season, the conditional retreat is accepted and that is that. It is the demand that he must foresee all possibilities ahead of time that is objectionable. Even in the case of the more usual procedure I think gamesmasters have to be a little wary here. To require that moves be submitted, conditional on a single retreat, as in the Silesia or Prussia example above, is quite all right. If there are four or five retreats that move, some of them perhaps interfering with one another, to then demand that following moves be sent in, conditional on the retreats, is to ask altogether too much. In such cases the better run magazines have a separate retreat move and accept the loss of time involved. (You should read some of Deshara's letters on this topic.)

There is one place, however, where I think that Just's ~~way~~ might be used to advantage. As we know, in some zines, there is an inequity in retreats. A player with a single space available for retreat is, in some zines, forced to accept it. In those same zines, a player with several openings is given his choice of them; if he fails to submit any retreat, his dislodged force is removed. This, in effect, gives him an additional alternative denied to the player with a single opening since, in some circumstances, to destroy the retreating force and to replace it with a build at home may be an advantage.

To re-establish equity many zines, including BROB when I published it, also gave the player with a single retreat opening the option of removal. When this procedure was introduced it met

opposition from the game's inventor, Allan Calhamer. See his letter in EROB #41. He did not like the fast jump home feature. He apparently did not realize that this option of removal had been given, in practice, long before in such journals as Graustark, and that all I was trying to do was to ensure that all players had the same opportunity. But Boardman, for example, certainly realizes that the procedure he follows is not fully fair. After the appearance of the EROB Rules Issue #84, last summer, John Boardman wrote me, his letter including the following remark on this subject:

"I am not happy about the retreat problem, but I don't know what to do about it."

It seems to be that the adoption of the Just Right Hand Retreat Rule, not as Just himself uses it, but in addition to the usual retreat procedure as used in Graustark and many others, would have the effect of restoring equity, not by giving all players the right of removal, but by seeing that none of them have that privilege. A player, forced to retreat, and having only one opening for the retreat available, would be forced to accept it, just as is now done in Grau. A player with two or more openings for a retreat move would be asked to submit a retreat order by a certain deadline, just as now. But if he failed to do so, instead of removing the force, let the gamesmaster order it to retreat in accordance with the Just Right Hand Rule. No player can then make the sudden jump home to which Calhamer so much objects. And the player with only one opening available and the player with several are treated exactly on a par. John Boardman and others who use the forced retreat might consider this.

Where do the experts play?

While looking through stacks of old Frobbingnags, trying to find Mr. Calhamer's letter referred to above, I stumbled across an item published about two and a half years ago. It was an attempt to assess the esteem in which the various postal journals were held by considering the number of leading players who played in them. That was back in the days when not very many winners had been declared and when everyone knew all the games Smythe was playing in, so that the item could be prepared almost off the top of ones head. It is different now. However I thought it might be of interest to try to do a repeat taking now as our leading players those listed in the Top Board, and counting games they entered during 1968. I have counted only games which they entered as initial players, not games entered as replacements. With the following results:

Monte Zelazny: 1 in Big Brother, 1 in Valhalla.

Donald Miller entered no new games in 1968.

Hal Neus, by far the most active of these leading players, 1 in Aeolus, 1 in Costaguana, 1 in Dinophobia, 1 in sTab,

1 in Verbal Chaos, 1 in Xenogogic, and 4 of the games which Dan Evans is conducting by carbon copy letter.

Harold Peck apparently believes in patronizing home industries. He entered two games in Costaguana, and 1 in Xeongogic, both San Diego Journals.

Gene Prosnitz entered 1 in Aeolus, 1 in Big Brother, 1 in Diplomania, 2 in Graustark, and 1 in sTab.

Charles Turner entered one in Diplophobia.

Charles Wells entered no games in 1968.

The Top Board used was that appearing in Prob #90. Other listing would have other individuals at the head of their lists but we can agree, I think, that these are all good players.

The totals for the various zines:

Aeolus	2	Graustark	2	Xenogogic	2
Big Brother	2	sTab	2	Dan Evans	4
Costaguana	3	Valhalla	1		
Diplophobia	3	Verbal Chaos	1		

The outcome is obviously, in part, a function of the number of games offered by the various zines: However much you may like a certain zine you can't enter a game in it if it doesn't offer any. The various zines offered the following number of games in 1968: ADNG 4; Aeolus 3; Big Brother 6; Cerebral Nebula 1; Costaguana 8; Diplodeur 1; The Diplomat 1; Diplophobia 5; Dies Irae 2; Efgiart 1; Erehwon 6; Glockorla 2; Graustark 5; La Guerre 6; Lost Ones 2; Ragnarok 3; Spald 1; sTab 3; Thulcandra 1; Valhalla 1; Verbal Chaos 1; The Voice 2; Xanadu 5; Xenogogic 3; Dan Evans 20. The percentage of these openings grabbed by the leading players named was as follows:

Verbal Chaos	14.3%	Xenogogic	9.5%	Big Brother	4.8%
Valhalla	14.3	Diplophobia	8.6	Dan Evans	2.8
Aeolus	9.5	Graustark	7.1	All others	0.0
sTab	9.5	Costaguana	5.4		

January 1969 will, I suppose, long be remembered as resurrection month seeing, as it did, the reappearance, after too long an absence, of Jutland Jollies, Wild 'n Wooly, International Enquirer, and Aeolus. Glockorla is now the zine whose absence is most conspicuous.